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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the theoretical and applied groundwork for a new "sociohistorical practice" of cross-cultural communication. Influenced heavily by the work of psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the theory assumes that the way teachers think about and teach culture should result from an understanding of how sociohistorical conditions produce cultural change. Students first learn to look for underlying technological and economic factors that create differing cultural behaviors, customs, values, beliefs, mythologies, and psychologies. They then practice various socially mediates adaptive responses to historically based cultural conditions. It is argued that only by combining theory and practice in this way can true intercultural empathy be developed. Case studies from the everyday lives of individuals around the world are cited as examples, and a practical framework for teaching culture in the foreign/second language classroom is presented. Three sample lesson plans are included. Contains 107 references. (MSE)

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TEACHING CULTURE — IN SEARCH OF A NEW MODEL

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TEACHING CULTURE — IN SEARCH OF A NEW MODEL

David A. Hough

Without the awareness that one has the capacity to adapt to history, we are left with trying to adapt to society (e.g., to racism and stigma), or as psychologists and educators, trying to help people in this process. —**Lois Holzman, *History is the Cure***

Abstract

This article explores the theoretical and applied groundwork for a new *Sociohistorical Practice* of cross-cultural communication. It is both a working theory and application (thus the term *Practice*), which the author has been developing over the past two years. Influenced heavily by many of the ideas of Soviet psychologist L.S. Vygotsky, it assumes that the way we think about and teach culture should result from an understanding of how sociohistorical conditions produce cultural change. Students first learn to look for underlying technological and economic factors which create differing cultural behaviors, customs, values, beliefs, mythologies and psychologies. They then practice various socially mediated adaptive responses to historically based cultural conditions. The author argues that only by combining theory and practice in this way can true intercultural empathy be developed. In expounding this thesis, the article includes case study examples from the everyday lives of people around the world and develops a practical framework for teaching culture in the foreign and second language classroom. The article concludes with three sample lesson plans which may be test piloted*

Why a New Model?

In his now classic work on dietary fiber, Dr. Denis Burkitt (1979) proved that many of today's commonest diseases — including both heart disease and cancer — were rare less than a century ago, and that their incidence only began to climb after the introduction of industrial milling processes that removed fiber from our cereals and grains. How did he make this discovery? Through a standard medical research technique known as epidemiology — the systematic study of the socioeconomic distribution of disease both synchronically (geographic within a given period of time) and diachronically (over the course of history). By combining synchronic and diachronic data on economically and technologically divergent social groups — data which included everything from information on recent dietary changes among Third World populations to rehydrated paleolithic stool samples, Burkitt was able to debunk many popular myths about these and other diseases that plague the 20th century industrialized world — and are increasingly effecting the economically oppressed Third World as well. He debunked, for example, the myth that people in past generations and centuries were unaware of these diseases; Sanskrit records from over 2,000 years ago contain detailed descriptions. He also debunked the myth, based on today's growing life expectancy, that people died of other causes before they could contract these diseases; the primary cause of greater life expectancy has been lower infant mortality, not decreasing death rates in middle life (p. 22). There have always been plenty of old people around. But before industrialization, they didn't die of cancer or heart disease — or, at least, not in the relative numbers experienced today.

Although epidemiologic studies are standard in medicine, most in mainstream cross-cultural communication research deny "that the expressions of culture are shaped by technology or economy. According to R.H. Lowie... cultural phenomena present merely a 'planless hodgepodge' or 'chaotic jungle'" (Novack, 1966; p. 16) of values, beliefs and assumptions. History is thus either ignored or placed within an ideological reductionist framework. The result is a static model of highly abstract cultural attributes and generalizations, usually about idealized (i.e., sociopolitically and economically dominant) elements within a given society. As such, most mainstream cross-cultural models reinforce the very stereotypical and ethnocentric values that they purport to overcome.

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This presents a serious problem for teachers of language and culture. Barnlund (1989) singles this out as being one of the greatest challenges to cross-cultural communication. He states that popular explanations are all too often unreliable, making it impossible to distinguish cultural mythology from truth. "Some are cliches, repeated so often they are finally believed; some constitute the abstract ideals of a given society but are claimed more than they are realized in daily life; still others may offer penetrating glimpses of the cultural ethos. But, in the absence of accurate data, it is difficult to know whether one is dealing with cultural myth, idealization, or valid insight" (p. xv).

In sharp contrast, the aim of *Sociohistorical Practice* is to avoid such occasionally insightful, often mythological static generalizations about specific cultures (e.g., "Japanese are this way, Americans are that way"). It understands culture as an adaptive dialectical material process to be explained sociohistorically rather than a static model of abstract attributes to be described either ideationally or psychologically. Students first learn how sociohistorical change is an uneven and combined process of development (i.e., producing both slow and sudden continuities and discontinuities) of cultural behavior, values and beliefs (Godelier, 1977; Hoston, 1994; Novack, 1966, 1972; Trotsky, 1973). They then practice various socially mediated adaptive responses to historically based cultural conditions. This reduces the tendency to overgeneralize and make inappropriate cultural attributions, and at the same time helps to develop capacities that will result in more successful cross-cultural and intercultural interactions. Through *Sociohistorical Practice* students should thus move from *learning* the WHAT of cultural processes, to *developing* the HOW of cultural empathy.

The term *sociohistorical* as used in this article comes from the sociohistorical (also translated historical-social) school of psychology founded by Lev Vygotsky during the renaissance of Soviet academia. This brief period, which began with the Bolshevik Revolution and died under the purges of Stalin, was a time of "great creativity and experimentation during which attempts were made to transform every area of human life — not only politics and economics, but also art and culture, science, the family, education and labor" (Newman & Holzman, 1993; p. 6). As a Marxist, Vygotsky devoted himself completely and enthusiastically to the task of bringing the dialectics of historical materialism to psychology and in so doing gave birth to a new human science which is experiencing fresh appeal and practical application among psychologists, educators and social scientists in the West a full 60 years after his death. It is in this same spirit that we approach the teaching of culture, and — in keeping with Vygotsky's *Sociohistorical* method — propose that culture must first be analyzed as a *process*, not a *thing*.

The Process of Change

Vygotsky (1978) explains that "Not only does every phenomenon have its history, but this history is characterized by changes both qualitative (changes in form and structure and basic characteristics) and quantitative" (p. 7). In the evolution of the universe, for example, everything comes from matter in motion. Biology follows, and from that social groupings and psychology. Carl Sagan (1980), describes how the heavy metals produced in first and second generation stars later began joining together in definite numbers and patterns to compose the organic molecules which form living cells.

Cultural development is part of this same process. Marx (1987) tells us, "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (p. 263). By way of example, LeVine (1980, 1982) and Harris (1980, 1987) cite customs and beliefs requiring lengthy periods of lactation and postpartum sexual abstinence among certain groups as being subconscious responses developed over time to the material need to limit population. These beliefs start to disappear once either having more babies is economically beneficial, or new methods of birth control are introduced. Therefore, as Bukharin (1969) argues, "any investigation of society, of the conditions of its growth, its forms, its content, etc., must begin with an analysis of the productive forces, or of the technical bases, of society" (p. 120).

This is not to denigrate the importance of ideas — humans are not only products of their environment, they are also active agents in creating it (Vygotsky, in Luria, 1979; p. 43). However, devoid of material necessity, ideas alone do little to alter the course of human development. In fact, as technology develops, we find things which answer questions/ideas which were never even asked or imagined. Technological and economic change is an evaluative (i.e., dialectic) process. Each new technological or economic innovation adds to our store of ideas and changes us; changes our ideas, our thinking, our behavior.

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The idealistic notion of a classical tradition where one man makes a world discovery by working in isolation is nothing more than cultural mythology. Unless they are pure accidents, discoveries are never made in isolation. For an individual to make a great discovery, that person must have the available free time as well as the requisite economic and material resources. Let's take, for example, Sir William Herschel's 1781 discovery of Uranus, a discovery which has often been cited as an example of an individual working by himself in the classical tradition. Not only did he have the free time of the gentry of that period, he worked in close concert with his sister, Caroline Lucretia Herschel (who, as a woman, did more work than she has ever been given credit for), and he had the economic resources needed to obtain the prerequisite mirror and lens-making technology which already existed. He also had access to papers and letters from contemporary European astronomers. He then used that knowledge to assemble what was, for a short period of time, the best working telescope in Europe. And with that telescope he focused on the already known stellar body of Uranus and demonstrated that it was not a star as previously thought, but the seventh planet in our solar system. The point is that the technology was already there. Had Herschel not done it, someone else would have. If not in 1781, then in 1782 or 1783.

Current approaches to cross-cultural communication, however clearly place the locus of culture in what Hofstede (1991) calls the "software of the mind." This results in mentalistic descriptions of culture based on commonly shared sets of abstract ideas and principles. In their introductory chapter to the sixth edition of *Intercultural Communication*, for example, Samovar and Porter (1991) state "Culture is an all-encompassing form or pattern for living. It is complex, abstract, and pervasive" (p. 14). Similarly, Brislin (1993) in the first chapter of *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior* makes the following statement:

> Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among people and that guide specific behaviors. Immediately, we are faced with an element of invisibility. Assumptions and ideals are not immediately obvious. Rather they are stored in people's minds and consequently are hard for outsiders to see. (p. 4)

Simply put, this is idealistic dualism. It obscures the reality that, studied historically, we find that behavioral ideals, values and assumptions derive from the productive forces of our material existence. In fact, Brislin, on the very next page, gives an excellent example of this process at work:

> Writing in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Arsenault (1989) argues that the introduction of air conditioning had an impact on the cultural value of "Southern Hospitality." Prior to about 1950, people would respond to hot and humid summers by sitting out on their porches and chatting with neighbors and passersby on the sidewalk. After the introduction of air conditioning and its widespread adoption in the mid and late 1950s, people would sit in their own living rooms and read, watch television, or chat with immediate family members. The sense of a wider community and knowledge about the goings-on in the lives of one's neighbors became noticeably diminished. (p. 5)

This change in cultural values is not a one-way behavioral cause-and-effect or stimulus-response process. It is dialectic: "Technology cannot be counterposed to culture for it is its mainspring. Without technology, there is no culture. The growth of technology advances culture. But the science and general culture that have arisen on the basis of technology constitute a powerful aid to further growth of technology. Here we have a dialectical interaction" (Trotsky, 1973; p. 229). Furthermore, it involves what Trotsky first termed *uneven and combined development* (Hoston, 1994). Novack (1966), summarizes this as follows:

> The mainspring of human progress is man's command over the forces of production. As history advances, there occurs a faster or slower growth of productive forces in this or that segment of society, owing to the differences in natural conditions and historical connections. These disparities give either an expanded or compressed character to entire historical epochs and impart varying rates and extents of growth to different peoples, different branches of economy, different classes, different social institutions and fields of culture. (p. 5)

We can clearly see this process at work in nature. Thermoacidophiles, for example — some of earth's earliest biological forms — can still be found unaltered today in the boiling acid pools of Yellowstone National Park (Doyle, 1994), while descendent dinosaurs have long since become extinct. Meanwhile, humans, after having undergone major and rapid evolutionary leaps 4 million, 1.5 million and approximately 200,000 years ago (Donald, 1991; p. 122), still retain ancestral remnants of the alligator brain.

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In culture as well, uneven and combined development can take a variety of forms. Older cultural beliefs and ideas, for example, may be institutionalized in support of new or changing socioeconomic systems and relations. This is particularly common where religious customs and beliefs are used by ruling elites for purposes of controlling the lower classes. Such was the case in the early history of the Christian Church, where animistic beliefs in patron gods or goddesses were transmuted into saint-worship because of their police value (Walker, 1959; pp. 8-9). Likewise, Godelier (1977) notes how the fifteenth century Inca State, in conquering neighboring indigenous populations, exploited local religious customs which had evolved in support of a system of economic reciprocity. These same beliefs and practices were now used to force newly enslaved peasants to work lands expropriated by and for the state (p. 64). Also, in Japan during the Tokugawa period, membership in local Buddhist temples was forced on the population for census and control purposes.

Sometimes, economic and technological change can result in the sudden leapfrogging of one or more segment or aspect of society out ahead of others. In discussing the problems of everyday life in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution, Trotsky (1973) noted that although politics was fast to change, ideas about domestic morality were slower. Women were now part of the managerial work force, but they were still tied to housework and childcare in the home.

Finally, the introduction of identical technologies to societies or groups with different socioeconomic systems can result in the development of highly divergent, or even opposite values, beliefs and behaviors. While the introduction of air conditioners helped decrease collectivist behaviors and values in the southern U.S., the same technology produced greater collectivism in Israeli kibbutzim by encouraging increased use of community rooms. Godelier (1977) notes a similar example among the American Plains Indians during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The northern and western groups were foot hunters and gatherers who lived in small bands where members were free to move from one band to another. The southern and eastern groups meanwhile were sedentary farmers and lived in hierarchically organized communal chiefdoms. With the introduction of the horse, and later guns, both groups moved to an economy based on bison hunting. The result was that the more collectivist sedentary groups from the south and east became increasingly individualistic and egalitarian because this new form of economy required greater mobility and individual initiative. At the same time the hitherto individualistic foot hunters and gatherers of the north and west became more hierarchical and collectivist because of the larger groups and greater organization needed for this type of hunting (pp. 4-5).

Culture and Psychology

It should be obvious from the above that any approach to psychology must be firmly grounded in an analysis of the processes of cultural change and employ the dialectics of historical materialism. Vygotsky (1978) argues that at the cultural level, "historical changes in society and material life produce changes in 'human nature' (consciousness and behavior)" (p. 7). Luria (1981) explains this key difference between the sociohistorical school and traditional psychology as follows:

> The basic difference between our approach and that of traditional psychology will be that we are not seeking the origins of human consciousness in the depths of the 'soul' or in the independently acting mechanisms of the brain (where we shall find nothing). Rather, we are operating in an entirely different sphere — in humans' actual relationship with reality, in their social history, which is closely tied to labor and language. (pp. 27-28)

This is a major Vygotskian tenant and one which found clear expression in the cross-cultural research Vygotsky did with Luria in Uzbekistan and Khirgizia in the early 1930s. Vygotsky and Luria intentionally selected a location where rapid changes in the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture combined in an uneven way with pre-revolutionary and pre-capitalist cultural forms in order to determine whether these changes produced noticeable "shifts in the basic forms, as well as the content of people's thinking" (Luria, 1979; p. 60). Luria (in Cole, 1974) describes the material conditions of the period in the area of Soviet Central Asia where they conducted their research:

> The non-technical economy (gardening, cotton-raising, animal husbandry) was replaced by more complex economic systems; there was a sharp increase in the communication with the cities; new people appeared in the villages; collective economy with joint planning and with joint organization of production radically changed the previous economic activity; extensive educational and propaganda work intruded on the traditional views which previously had been determined by the simpler life of the village; a large network of schools designed to liquidate illiteracy was introduced to a

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> large portion of the population and, in the course of a few years, the residents of these villages were included in a system of educational institutions, and at the same time were introduced to a kind of theoretical activity which had previously not existed in those areas... (p. 32)

Although part of the reason for this research was to gather hard data against the contemporary cognitive psychology of Jean Piaget (and thus to prove that I.Q. tests are culturally inappropriate and discriminatory instruments of classification), their fieldwork was willfully misrepresented by Stalinist elements and further cross-cultural research was banned. Not long after, Vygotsky died of tuberculosis and all references to the man and/or his work were purged.

Nevertheless, even during their brief expedition, Vygotsky and Luria obtained an impressive core of cross-cultural data, the implications of which bear extreme relevance for today's educators. They tested what cognitive psychologists have referred to as ecologically valid, logical, or deductive inference (Eysenck, 1990), through the use of syllogism, and determined that its use was limited to those members of the changing society who — through schooling — were prepared to participate in abstract games about unreal (but scholastically logical) conditions. Meanwhile, they found that peasants who were still tied to the land made greater use of concrete knowledge about their material conditions. Not only did they reject syllogism as abstract and irrelevant to their needs, they rejected any and all perceptual abstractions which could not be explained in terms of the concrete tools of their economy. In this latter regard, Vygotsky and Luria discovered that both forms of cognition, while eminently logical, were based on economic and technological need.

Vygotsky and Luria thus established that changes in everyday economic life directly effected the interest and capacity of those involved to make abstract generalizations about the world beyond their own personal experience. Only for those who had been exposed to formal schooling, did evolving needs clearly produce developmental changes in the capacity for abstract thinking (a strong argument against I.Q. as well as many language proficiency tests). Luria (1979) states, "In all cases we found that changes in the practical forms of activity, and especially the reorganization of activity based on formal schooling, produced qualitative changes in the thought processes of the individuals studied. Moreover, we were able to establish that these changes in the organization of thinking can occur in a relatively short time when there are sufficiently sharp changes in social-historical circumstances, such as those following the 1917 Revolution" (p. 80).

While it is beyond the scope of this article to detail all the experiments utilized in their research [See Luria, 1979], Cole (1993a) summarizes the empirical results as follows, "...human psychological functions differ from the psychological processes of other animals because they are ***culturally mediated, historically developing,*** and arise from ***practical activity***" (p. 91). The term ***culturally mediated*** here means that human psychology is shaped by the dialectic interplay of man with the environment through the use of tools (including thought and language), stretching through the entirety of human history (and thus ***historically developing***). Finally, these psychological functions are based on the ***practical activity*** of human relations. Vygotsky (in Cole, 1993a) states, "the mind is not a complex network of [general] capabilities, but a set of specific capabilities. ...Learning... is the acquisition of many specialized abilities for thinking" (p. 92).

Although often cloaked in the language of cognitive or behavioral psychology and missing the dialectics of historical materialism, Vygotsky's sociohistorical school is nevertheless finding greater expression in mainstream psychology. In their introduction to *Emotion and Culture*, for example, Kitayama and Markus (1994) state:

> Following the sociocultural theories of Mead (1934) and Vygotsky (1978), we may further suggest that this entire process of adaptation creates, consolidates, and holds in place the very meaning and significance of a myriad of "culturally constructed things" (D'Andrade, 1984) such as self, others, justice, honor, and many emotion categories cross-culturally common (e.g., anger and joy) and culture specific (e.g., *fago, amae, lajya, let,* and many others). Although prepared and afforded by many biological processes and components, human emotions are actually shaped and formed by culture. Thus, taken in its entirety, emotion as a psychological process may be seen primarily as social and cultural. (p. 17)

Likewise, Frijda and Mesquita (1994), argue that rather than being mere feeling states, emotions are "parts of the very process of interacting with the environment ...[that must be understood socially] ...as dynamically changing, structured elements in ongoing interchanges, which both influence and are influenced by the other elements in these interchanges..." (p. 51). They note, for example, that magical spells can elicit fear in some cultures but not in others, while violent anger is an appropriate response to an insult in Albania, but taboo among the Utku Inuit (p. 64).

Nevertheless, as cognitive psychologists, while giving credence to cultural mediation in psychology, they fail to explain how these cross-cultural differences are *historically developing* phenomena grounded in *practical activity*. That is, they fail to address the key sociohistorical components of Vygotsky's psychology.

Newman (1991), attempts to correct this lack of sociohistorical perspective in psychology when he traces the rise of anxiety as a commonly felt emotion to the first half of the nineteenth century — one which although known throughout history did not become epidemic until the industrial revolution when it was first described by Kierkegaard in 1844. Likewise, panic attack (Newman, 1991), and conflicts between competitive drives and the search for intimacy (Holzman & Newman, 1988), are further examples of sociohistorical responses to changes in post-industrialized twentieth-century society. Attitudes about self-esteem (Branden, 1992) and feelings about love and family (Engels, 1972) also have distinct sociohistorical patterns of development.

Cognitive psychologists are not the only ones who fail to explain behavior from a sociohistorical perspective. Triandis (1988a), a behavioral cross-cultural psychologist, notes that the word *mamihlapinatapei* in the language of the Tierra del Fuego Indians means, "looking at each other hoping that either one will offer to do something that both desire but are unwilling to do." The fact that no such word exists in the English language, according to Triandis, is because there are probably no Westerners who make this emotional attribution (p. 131). Put in sociohistorical perspective, however, it is probably more accurate to say that this complex emotion finds greater expression in contemporary popular romantic song and verse than in common speech because of the very conflicts Holzman and Newman (1988) describe between competitive drives and the search for intimacy in capitalist society. One could argue, for example, that the following American lyrics *do* express *mamihlapinatapei*: "...we're children needing other children and letting our grown up pride hide all the need inside!" from *People*, as an expression of mid-century alienation; or the more recent and panic-stricken, "...and it's all, oh, you're paralyzing my mind. And for that you suck!" from *You Suck*.

It should be noted that the use of a single word in Fuegan to express this complex emotion is not the issue here since the form is obviously agglutinative, containing morphological elements which would translate as a phrase rather than a word in English. Nevertheless, this is not to say that one could not coin a single word in English — or any other language, for that matter — to impart the same feeling. In fact, Newman (1991) believes that humans have the capacity to feel many more than the 20 or so emotions commonly described in psychology books and that it is only because of the uneven and combined historical contradictions in our development that we are blocked. As a Vygotskian psychologist, he takes the sociohistorical process of psychological attribution one step further when he states "We can create a world in which our capacity to feel emotion is profoundly different from what it is now" (p. 148).

The dilemma of cross-cultural psychology is not limited to cognitive or behavioral approaches. It extends to Gestalt/phenomenological psychology as well. Once again, without historical materialism as a tool in understanding change, behavior is reduced to psychological or biological description. Ethnocentrism and prejudice, for example, are often seen as ecologically valid (i.e., universal and possibly innate) forms of psychological attribution rather than economically determined forms of sociohistorical exploitation. This, however, clouds the difference between the racism of the oppressor and the righteous anger of the oppressed. Both simply become forms of prejudice which, with the help of well designed cross-cultural sensitivity training, can hopefully be reduced if not extinguished. This, in fact, is exactly what Bennett (1993) means when he states, "Intercultural sensitivity is *not natural* [italics added]. It is not part of our primate past, nor has it characterized most of human history... Education and training in intercultural communication is an approach to changing our 'natural' behavior" (p. 21). Of course, Bennett would be right if, as he would have us believe, we have all been the same psychological beings since the beginning of homo erectus. Then all we have to do is to understand history and culture psychologically. If, on the other hand, our psychology changes according to differing sociohistorical conditions, we must study how those conditions produce that psychology. To do otherwise would be to create another set of cultural myths.

Furthermore, as we have already noted, even when biological or psychological links can be made, mediating sociohistorical factors will greatly alter those behaviors across groups and socioeconomic classes. Ian Burkitt (1991), argues, "the biological nature of humans cannot be separated out from social history and tested as an independent element, for the logic of human activity, along with needs and capacities, is always determined within social relations." To look at one possible example, male aggression appears to have high ecological validity (Mazur, 1976; Segall, et. al., 1990; Erchak, 1992). Nevertheless, the wide variances of manifest behavior both synchronically and diachronically across

cultures (Harris, 1991), suggest socioeconomic mediating factors. Likewise, theories about the universality of human greed, often cited as a rationalization for capitalism, fall apart when looked at in the context of redistributive headmen and chiefdoms (Harris, 1991). Greed, it seems, only comes into play when surpluses exceed a certain level.

The Politics of Teaching Culture

If God punished men for crimes as man punishes man for poverty, then woe to the sons of Adam — as quoted in Engels — *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

The primary goal of cross-cultural communication is to build understanding. This is particularly important in the foreign and second language classroom. Yet, deprived of sociohistorical context, the question becomes "whose understanding?" Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) eloquently addresses this question when he says, "Well-intentioned, nice teachers participate every day in committing linguistic genocide and reducing the world's linguistic and cultural diversity without being aware of it and without wanting to. It might be good to stop and think how and why" (p. 627).

From a sociohistorical perspective, much of the answer lies in the class inequality of the educational system and its supporting institutions, or what Hofstede (1991; p. 24) calls "power distance" (a term derived from the Dutch experimental social psychologist Mauk Mulder). Hofstede states, "Inequality within a society is visible in the existence of different social classes... classes differ in their access to and opportunities for benefiting from the advantages of society, one of them being higher education" (p. 28). Trotsky (1973) lends sociohistorical clarity to Hofstede's remarks when he explains, "The class structure of society has determined to a decisive degree the content and form of human history, that is, its material relations and their ideological reflections. This means that historical culture has possessed a class character" (p. 228).

All too often, however, this is overlooked by researchers in education, psychology and the social sciences. Writing as a social psychologist, Argyle (1994) notes, "For a number of years social psychologists have been saying that we should 'make social psychology more social' and stop carrying out artificial experiments in a vacuum'. One of the most important variables in the outside world is surely class, yet it has often been notable by its absence from our work" (p. 288). Martin (1994), in describing recent trends in intercultural communication, notes influences from European Critical Theory: "One of the fundamental assumptions of this perspective is that all research — from decisions about what is studied to what and whose work gets published — is political, value laden, and occurs within a context of power hierarchy. A further assumption is that researchers need to recognize and identify the role of power in research (for example, considering situations in which the researcher and research subjects are from different social strata) and the implications of these differences for research findings. Finally, there is a strong belief that research should include a social agenda — that findings should be accessible and applicable to practitioners" (p. 14).

There is currently a growing dialogue within the language teaching profession regarding this issue (Allison, 1994; Benesch, 1993a, 1993b, 1994; Cazden, 1994; Cromwell, 1994; Davidson, 1994a, 1994b; Hakuta, 1986; Levine, 1993; Phillipson, 1988, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, 1994; Tollefson, 1991; and others). Benesch (1994) states, "Those who ignore questions of power participate in maintaining the low status of ESL students and faculty in higher education (Canagarajah, 1993; Pennycook, 1989)" (p. 624). Tollefson (1991) takes this a step further when he states, "Language education professionals must reject the notion that learning a language is an ideologically neutral act intended simply to develop an employment skill. That some people must learn English to get a job is a *result* of unequal relationships of power — not a *solution* to them" (p. 210). Meanwhile, Levine (1993) argues that the history of teaching English as an additional language in multilingual (and thus also, multicultural) classrooms "is a history riddled with race, class, cultural and linguistic prejudice, a history of both official and unofficial obstruction to educational development" (p. 190).

Coming not from TESOL, but cross-cultural communication, Yum (1991) alludes to this same problem when she states, "Most cross-cultural studies of communication simply describe foreign communication patterns and then compare them to those of North America, rarely going beneath the surface to explore the source of such differences" (p. 66). For her, however, this "source" derives from "the influence of the philosophical foundations and value systems of the society in which it is found" (p. 66). But if we bury power distance under a mound of philosophical foundations and value systems, we are left with cultural mythology — or maybe worse. Vygotsky (1978) identifies this approach as one where "analysis is essentially description and not explanation. ...Mere description does not reveal the actual causal-dynamic relations that underlie phenomena" (p. 62). As Trotsky

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noted, these philosophical foundations and value systems are still ideological reflections of class inequalities — and as such are certainly worthy of both description and explanation from a sociohistorical point of view — but they cannot in and of themselves be treated as underlying cultural explanations which reveal causality.

Part of the failure of cross-cultural communication to correctly address these issues comes from the cultural relativism of Lowie, Herskovits and other followers of Boas — although not necessarily Boas himself (Harris, 1968). In reacting to the widespread racism of 19th century colonialist-era anthropology which essentially divided the world into "civilized" European and "primitive" non-European societies, these early twentieth century anthropologists demanded that ethnography refrain from all moral and ethical judgments and recognize that each culture has its own sets of values and belief systems which can only be judged relative to its own standards (Bagish, 1981). But in the process, they threw the proverbial diachronic baby out with the bath water. Ideals, values and assumptions were now reduced to descriptions of what Brislin referred to earlier — invisible abstractions stored in people's minds and consequently hard for outsiders to see or understand. According to Bagish (1981), cultural relativism, while appearing to be tolerant and neutral, is actually a conservative doctrine that supports the status quo, where exploitation and oppression simply become value-based cultural differences about which no moral or ethical judgments can be made. To this one might add that what cultural relativism really supports is twentieth century neocolonialism, just as nineteenth century anthropology supported colonialism.

Finally, some mention should be made of the national character studies of the 1940s, many of which were commissioned by the U.S. War Department as part of its anti-German and Japanese propaganda effort (including Ruth Bennett's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*). The legacy of these studies, notorious for propagating ethnocentrism and cultural mythology, are still very much part of cross-cultural communication theory. Not only did they ignore sociohistorical, minority and class differences, they used as their unit of analysis national political entities, thus legitimizing the idealized values of the ruling elites of the countries under study. And, as Erchak (1992) notes, they attempted "to characterize a human population on the basis of psychological rather than, say, political or economic, traits." Unfortunately, the culture components of many foreign language textbooks in use today still rely heavily on this approach. Even for thos. which don't, however, cultural relativism is still pervasive. In their now classic *American Cultural Patterns*, a cross-cultural reference book used widely by language teachers, Stewart and Bennett (1991) make the following claims about American attitudes and values regarding individual achievement:

> The dominant motive for the typical American is... externalized achievement. Its impulse has been described as the key psychological factor in producing unparalleled economic abundance in the United States. ...The limit on success is not ascribed to resources, to the actions of others, to the agency of government, or to fate. For, as prescribed by the Protestant ethic, those who have the desire and work hard enough will have their labors rewarded with success... Doctrines such as Marxism, which promulgate inevitable conflict among classes because the limited goods of the world are acquired by a few who exploit the masses, have rarely achieved great favor among Americans. Traditionally, Americans have seen failure as a lack of will and effort on the part of the individual. According to the Protestant ethic, successful accumulation of worldly wealth was a sign that the individual belonged to the select group that enjoyed the grace of God. The same idea is still present in a new version: a rich person cannot by completely bad — or else the person would not be rich. (p. 80)

The above passage — presumably intended to improve cultural understanding and reduce ethnocentrism — begins with psychological description of an idealized national characteristic. The authors then employ ideological reflections of class to deny its existence (or relevance), and thus marginalize large segments of the population who throughout American history have not shared this view — including ethnic minorities and many in the working class (numerous ESL students and teachers among them), as well as members the growing urban and rural underclass. In the process the authors also misrepresent Marxist doctrine (limited goods, services and jobs of are the *result* of capitalist greed in a shrinking and highly competitive world market, not the *cause* of inequality and need). Nevertheless, the above passage is a good example of how cultural mythology is commonly used to rationalize class inequality and stigmatize those who are not "typical". How teachers of language and culture are supposed to use this information to improve cultural understanding and reduce ethnocentrism, however, is problematic unless we consider the advice of Cazden (1994). Using some of Vygotsky's ideas as a model to examine the conditions of ESL literacy teaching in today's highly stratified South Africa, she concludes "ESL teachers are by definition engaged in work that requires

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political awareness as well as technical competence. Or, to put it another way, ESL teachers' technical competence should include what is often called critical literacy — the ability to analyze how English is being used in our students' worlds" (p. 175). In order to better understand the sociohistorical perspective of Marx and Vygotsky on this matter, it may be worthwhile to quote at length from Seve (1978), who, in describing the state of education in France during the period of deGaulle, argues that pedagogy is inseparably bound to the politics of economy:

> Take the example of the struggle of the French democratic forces against the Gaullist administration's educational policy as it developed in the 1960s with the 'Fouchet Plan' — ...from a financial standpoint it involves the sacrificing of schools for atomic strike-capaticy and, more generally, the distribution of budgetary funds in the interests of monopolies; from a political and ideological standpoint it involves the education of youth given over to the employers and forces of reaction. But this still does not exhaust the essential point. What it also involves, more fundamentally, is a comprehensive plan to reform the whole educational system by adapting it not to the democratically conceived requirements of national development but to strict manpower needs of big capital caught up in a desperate inter-monopolistic struggle (i.e., by scorning the right of the majority of the people's children to education) thereby worsening social inequalities, this is not openly in the name of class politics of course, but under the 'objective' pretext that most of them are not 'gifted' enough to exercise their right. 'Look how democratic I am', the defender of such a policy says: only aptitudes will be taken into account to direct children either into brief educational studies and minor jobs or into lengthy studies and senior positions. He merely 'forgets' to say — among other things — that in so far as one can establisn it beyond all doubt, inequality in intellectual abilities is itself substantially predetermined by inequality in social conditions and its system of cumulative effects. Thus selection *according to* aptitude, which is deeply opposed to the many-sided effort of democratic schools toward the promotion of all *in spite of* the effect of class inequalities, amounts to making 'nature' responsible for a policy of cultural Malthusianism and social discrimination. (pp. 13-14)

Seve goes on to say that one of the originators of the Fouchet Plan defended it in Malthusian terms by explaining that, "On the weight of the evidence there are two pyramids — that of society which, with its hierarchy, corresponds to nature. Then there is also the pyramid of aptitudes. By that very fact, these two pyramids have the same profile. The problem is simply to make them coincide" (p. 14). Here we can clearly see how the cognitive psychology of Piaget and the sociohistorical psychology of Vygotsky play different roles in the politics of economy — Piaget's to reinforce the forces of exploitation and discrimination, Vygotsky's to liberate us from them. Piaget claimed that development precedes learning and that the stages of development are universal, with each stage clearly following the previous level in the sequence. His famous conservation of liquid experiments, for example, purport to demonstrate that children between the age of seven and eight should be able to distinguish liquid volume in containers of different shapes. Even though hundreds of tests around the world have failed to prove the ecological validity of this theory (Berg & Kugelmass, 1994; Wadsworth, 1989), Piagetians still claim that problems such as these can be used to test a child's intellectual development to determine which children are gifted, which are average and which are behind in their development. This in turn, allows educators to funnel students into appropriate tracks at different levels of the Fouchet aptitude pyramid — and in so doing meet the needs of the labor market pyramid. Vygotsky, on the other hand, believed that "learning, because it is fundamentally a social process, not a private, individualistic one, must be *in advance* of development in order for development to continue" (p. 111). Thus "...properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning" (Vygotsky, 1978; p. 90, quoted in Holzman, 1988; p. 111). This is what Vygotsky and Luria demonstrated in Central Asia, and in so doing proved that intelligence testing is not only discriminatory, it is used as a mask to support the interests of bourgeois capitalism.

The conclusion is unmistakable: just as development follows learning in psychology, so too does ideology follow the politics of economic need in society — or, as Green and Newman (1988) remind us, "Though profoundly biased, ideology is not biased by virtue of having been created in some fictional manner by the bourgeoisie. It is biased in the manner of science, not of the novel. It is produced by the organization of production itself, and the control of ideology is to some extent a byproduct of the control of the means of production that yields the ideology" (p. 85). We now turn to what this means for teachers of language and culture.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

The white man knows how to make everything, but he does not know how to distribute it — Sitting Bull

Despite the many shortcomings of mainstream cross-cultural communication research, there is nevertheless a vast body of information which, if properly utilized, can prove extremely useful. Even national character and cultural relativism studies based on ideas, attitudes, values and beliefs can enlighten. Studies claiming to be empirical, while often more difficult to correctly interpret without supporting sociohistorical (including class) data, can also be of help. Godelier (1977) explains this latter problem of empirical research as follows:

> All empiricism has a tendency to reduce the analysis of societies to a demonstration of their visible functioning traits, then regrouping the societies under various concepts, according to the presence or absence of some of these traits chosen as points of comparison. In this way we can get 'abstract' concepts made up of descriptive resumes of traits abstracted from the whole to which they belong. Such concepts are neither completely empty nor useless (as Marx said apropos of concepts of 'production in general' or 'consumption in general') in that they avoid useless repetition, but they do not constitute scientific concepts. They are simply legal currency for rational thought. They only become truly negative on another level when invested with an 'explanatory' value, that is, a demonstrative value, within the framework of the theoretical analysis of a precise problem, for example, the evolution of forms of society. (p. 90)

One current example from the research of cross-cultural psychology involves individualism and collectivism. Markus and Kitayama (1991), using a test of 20 sentences, all starting with "I am..." to distinguish interdependent (e.g., "I am a member of the school band") from independent (e.g., "I am hard working") concepts of self, report that Japanese — and, in fact all Eastern cultures — are highly interdependent, a trait which Triandis (1994) sites is an example of collectivism. A different scale of individualism and collectivism developed by Hofstede (1991), however, reports that Japanese are just over the median, tending slightly more toward individualism. Meanwhile, others have noted a lack of any firm correlation between collectivism and collectivist traits based on Confucian (i.e., East Asian) values of reciprocity and proper relationships (Yum, 1991). Nevertheless, all of the studies in question have interpreted these data to suggest that some kind of dichotomous relationship exists between Eastern and Western cultural values based on individualism and collectivism, and that these differences are due — at least in part — to the contrasting ideologies and philosophical traditions of these two geographically disparate groups. In order to make use of empirical studies such as these, we need to study the individualism-collectivism dimension sociohistorically.

The literature on individualism and collectivism is extremely rich (Berry, 1976; Brislin, 1993; Condon, 1975; Gudykunst, 1991; Markus and Kitayama, 1991, 1994; Segall, et. al., 1990; Triandis, 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1994; jus. to name some of the more salient), and includes numerous references to possible causal dynamics at the level of sociohistorical analysis in addition to a wealth of standard empirical data on the psychological attributes of this dimension. Individualism, for example, has been described as a system of values and beliefs common to northern and western Europe and North America (Triandis, 1988b), and derived from the Protestant ethic of hard work, self-reliance, freedom, independence and reward based on achievement (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Triandis (1994) notes the individualistic pattern stresses that:

- the views, needs and goals of the self are most important, whereas the collectivist emphasizes the views, needs, and goals of some collective;
- behavior can be explained by the pleasure principle and the computation of personal profits and loses, whereas the collectivist stresses that behavior is a function of norms and duties imposed by the collective;
- beliefs distinguish the individual from the in-group, allowing the individual to be an autonomous entity, whereas the collectivist pattern emphasizes shared beliefs, that is, what the individual and the collective have in common;
- social behavior is independent of and emotionally detached from the collective, whereas in the collectivist pattern, it is dependent, emotionally attached, and involved with the collective. Furthermore, social behavior in collectivist cultures is cooperative and even self-sacrificing toward in-group members, but indifferent, even hostile, toward out-group members.

If this is true, we must employ a process of analysis that reveals real, causal dynamic relations and reconstructs all the points in the developmental process (Vygotsky, 1978). A good place to start might be with with a review of the history of the Protestant reformation. Here we shall refer to Williston Walker's 1959 revised edition of *A History of the Christian Church*. First published in 1918 when he was Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University, his now classic and highly authoritative work is still widely used in many Protestant theological seminaries throughout North America.

The period in history which saw the rise of the Protestant reformation can be seen as a time of rapid technological and economic expansion which pitted the interests of the growing mercantile class in Germany against the existing feudal aristocracy of the Papal States and large segments of the Holy Roman Empire. For the trading cities of Germany to firmly establish a moneyed capitalist economy, they needed to abolish the church edict against the payment of interest on loans, generate tax revenue denied them by the church and create a stable supply of cheap and productive labor by forcing peasants off tax-exempt feudal lands owned by the church. This last requirement also meant severing peasant dependence on a paternalistic papal hierarchy which sold indulgences instead of requiring penance and hard work for the forgiveness of sins, sponsored numerous non-productive religious holidays and countenanced begging. It also implied a subsequent need for greater literacy, education and application of scientific method. The cumulative effect of the above requirements was a clear abrogation of papal infallibility and a complete theological break with the Roman Catholic Church — a break which manifested itself in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century rise of German humanism and is most notable in the successful establishment of a separate church of (what was later termed) Protestants by Martin Luther and his followers under the territorial protection of Frederick the Wise. Luther's program for reformation was eminently more practical than theological. He demanded that "papal misgovernment, appointments and taxation are to be curbed; burdensome offices abolished; German ecclesiastical interests should be placed under a "Primate of Germany"; clerical marriage permitted; the far too numerous holy days reduced in the interest of industry and sobriety; beggary, including that of the mendicant orders, forbidden; brothels closed; luxury curbed; and theological education in the universities reformed" (p. 308).

Given the explosive sociohistorical conditions of the time, it is easy to imagine the potential for not one, but two concurrent Protestant reformations — one representing the class interests of the growing bourgeoisie and the other — partly in response to the first but also in uneven combination with it — representing the often less articulate interests of an increasingly disenfranchised peasantry. This is, in fact, what actually happened, with one group of radicalized peasants from southern Germany demanding "the right of each community to choose and depose its pastor, that great tithes (on grain) be used for the support of the pastor and other community expenses, and the small tithes abolished, that serfdom be done away, reservations for hunting restricted, the use of the forests allowed to the poor, forced labor be regulated and duly paid, just rents fixed, new laws no longer enacted, common lands restored to communities from which they had been taken, and payments for inheritance to their masters abolished. Other groups of peasants, one of which had Thomas Muzner as a leader, were far more radical" (p. 316). These radical religious demands by the peasants of southern Germany were savagely attacked — not by the Roman Catholic Church, but by Luther in his pamphlet *Against the Murderous and Thieving Rabble of the Peasants*, where he called on German princes to "crush them with the sword." His call was duly heeded and in 1525, with great bloodshed and brutality, history firmly established a new era of ideology based on the needs of bourgeois capitalism.

The suppression of the peasantry left the princes and the trading cities the real ruling forces of Germany. In support of these interests, Lutheranism espoused an ideology which on one hand offered freedom, independence and reward ("a Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none"), while on the other demanded responsibility, hard work, sobriety, duty and servitude ("a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one"), although it is not hard to imagine which group reaped the rewards and which did the serving. This suggests that the development of individualism in Germany (a development which quickly spread to other parts of northern and western Europe), was based more on predetermined class interests than on questions of theology and free will. It also suggests that there is a close correspondence between power distance and the individualism-collectivism dimension. Triandis (1994), quoting Laab (1991) notes, "The more stratification there is in a society, the more people at the top can "do their own thing" and be individualistic" (p. 295). Likewise, Yamazaki (1994) states that rulers and merchants in any society have historically been more individualistic while the military and peasantry have tended to be more collectivist.

In looking for underlying conditions which might tweeze power distance from the individualism-collectivism dimension — or determine whether such a separation is possible — it may be worthwhile to examine groups and societies which are reputed to have little or no power distance, such as hunters and gatherers. Kim (1990) argues that migratory tribes living in jungles, mountains and deserts tend to be more individualistic, assertive and venturesome, while those living in agricultural communities tend more toward collectivism. Likewise, Tharp (1990) contrasts the historical collective agricultural economy of Hawaii with the more individualistic nomadic and later pastoral economy of the Navajo. This is highly consistent with Godelier's (1977) claim that agriculturalists among the Plains Indians were more collectivist than their neighboring foot hunters and gatherers. Nevertheless, the differences between these "proto individualists and proto collectivists" (Triandis, 1987) is probably not all that wide. Numerous collectivist traits have been found among hunters and gatherers as well (Harris, 1991; Mander, 1992; Russell, 1980; Triandis, 1987), particularly where their activities required cooperation such as in damming a river and poisoning the water to catch fish (Triandis, 1987). Egalitarian distribution of food also seems pervasive both among hunters and gatherers and early agriculturalists who were in transition (i.e., hunters and gatherers who also engaged in gardening) (Russell, 1980). Mandler (1992) notes that these groups had no private ownership of resources, that goods were produced for use value based on cooperative and collective modes of production (with the average workday 3-5 hours), and that the recognizable operative political modes were anarchist, communist, or theocratic. He also notes that, while interdependence was stressed, strong ingroup/outgroup distinctions remained weak. Outsiders were frequently accepted into the group.

With greater dependence on agricultural production, however, two problems arose which in their mutual resolution created a new set of relations based on power distance. The first was that food production exceeded immediate demand and thus resulted in surpluses. Originally, these surpluses were redistributed to the community in times of need. A second problem arose, however, where these surpluses — along with the increasingly sedentary populations who produced them — needed protection from marauding bands of nomads, encroaching migrant populations and invading imperial armies. These surpluses now took the form of tribute or tax to support local armies, fortifications and other construction projects. It is here that we see the beginnings of the state, classes, and coercive control mechanisms (including the use of ideologies and theologies) to support these new relations (Harris, 1980). This suggests that power distance arises out of the class stratification and coercion which develops when surpluses are no longer redistributed to the community.

Based on the above, we hypothesize that where power distance is minimal, behaviors along the individualism-collectivism dimension will tend to fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum, around what Condon (1974) has called individuality. Thus, while on one hand we should expect to see more tolerance for individual difference (e.g., freedom of movement, action and innovation), we should also see greater cooperation and egalitarianism. As power distance (i.e., class stratification and coercion) increases, those who gain positions of control will become more individualistic and use surplus resources to their own advantage, while those who do not will be forced to rely on limited collective resources in order to survive. We can clearly see the latter reflected in the radical demands of the Protestant peasantry in southern Germany for redistribution of grain to meet community needs, use of forests by the poor and restoration of common lands to the communities. Meanwhile, the former is manifested in the feudalistic paternalism of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which used collectivist ideology to force obedience to the authority of a corrupt and individualistic nobility in southern and western Europe (Walker, 1959). Mettam (1991) notes, "the concept of nobility, although it had no moral justification, was of practical use in society. When ordinary people regarded an elite group with respect, they behaved with humility towards it" (p. 93).

Returning to power distance and the relationship of ideology to coercion in the maintenance of control in stratified societies, it may now be possible to begin to make at least a tentative interpretation of some of the varying empirical data described earlier in this section regarding the individualism-collectivism dimension and differing philosophical traditions and beliefs in the East and West which purport to support them. Markus and Kitayama (1991) for example, have interpreted their data to show that Japanese have a strong interdependent group-oriented sense of self which derives from long-standing beliefs and philosophical traditions. By way of example, they note that former Japanese vice prime minister Shin Kanamaru "claimed that his political philosophy included the principle of giving the foremost priority to interpersonal relations" (p. 18). This quote is interesting since not long after its publication he was arrested in a major kickback scandal which ultimately brought down the ruling Liberal Democratic Party government. That is, he got caught with his pants down in what can only be described as self engrandizement of the most individualistic

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order. Nevertheless, the quote is valuable, for as Yamazaki (1994) points out, "In the workplace people still make half-jesting remarks about the importance of the company organization and the priority of the job. To be sure, the joking tone contains subtle nuances that point more to the Japanese ability to put up a good front than to a serious sense of loyalty, but superficially, at least, such comments are the unmistakable mark of a group orientation" (p. 69). This suggests that in Japan, at least, collectivism may be one of those abstract values which, in Barnlund's (1989) words "are claimed more than they are realized in daily life." If so, then the problem with the Markus and Kitayama data may be that it tests ingroup/outgroup relations of power distance more than those of the individualism-collectivism dimension. This would then fit more neatly with Hofstede's data which place Japanese just over the median, tending slightly more toward individualism, while listing Guatemalans as being the most collectivist among IBM employees he studied from 52 countries. It also fits with Gudykunst (1991) who states that "the company often is considered the primary ingroup in Japan (Nakane, 1970), while the family is the primary ingroup in many other collectivist cultures (e.g., Latin and South America)" (p. 47).

Here we may wish to take a closer look at why these two forms of power distance in Latin America and Japan are based on variations of collectivist values while in northwestern Europe and North America power distance is based on more individualistic values. Novack (1971) argues that "Spain and Portugal created economic forms in the New World that had a combined character. They wedded precapitalist relations to exchange relations, thereby subordinating them to the demands and movements of merchant capital. During the colonial period, diverse forms of forced rather than free labor prevailed in the main areas of production such as mining, ranching and agricultural enterprises. The subjugated native population toiled under serfdom (the *mita*), outright slavery, peonage or debt servitude, and sharecropping. Wage labor cropped up here and there but was exceptional, marginal and stunted. The *ecomiendas*, which were the principal source of wealth and power, were a feudal, not a bourgeois form of property and method of production, and the landed aristocrats who held them were as feudalized as their counterparts on the Iberian peninsula." (p. 154). Guatemala makes a particularly interesting case in point since many of these same relations continue in existence today — although rapid changes are also producing highly individualistic capitalist forms of exploitation as can be seen in the rise of Evangelical Protestantism in that country.

Meanwhile, although similar precapitalist relations existed in Edo Japan, there was nevertheless a noticeable movement toward capitalism. Yamazaki (1994) notes that "traditions of Japanese culture were by no means particularly agrarian or familistic. On the contrary, their strongly urban tone, commercial and industrial spirit, and fairly high degree of individualism makes them comparable to features that have characterized Western culture since the seventeenth century" (p. 20). In fact, if the Edo period had been allowed to run its course without foreign intervention, the inevitable conflicts between the interests of the feudal elite and the increasingly powerful mercantile class could easily have produced conditions similar to those which gave rise to the Protestant reformation in Europe. Also as in Europe, this conflict included a third wave of growing peasant unrest. In describing one such peasant rebellion in 1866 which destroyed merchant property and attacked a fief's grain storage warehouse, Bix (1986) notes:

> At Kurashiki, conscripted peasant soldiers [nohei], in charge of guarding the the fief's warehouse, fired on the peasants and killed one. The peasants then were encouraged to take a hard hand to the enemy. Their spirits rose and they felled one official with a stone. He was sent to Tsuyama in a palanquin on the verge of death. The other officials fled to the bakufu district magistrate's office in nearby Miuchi [Toki] fief. (p. 181)

The ideological manifestation of this three-way conflict had already begun to involve challenges to the feudal Japanese corruption of Confucian principles which placed loyalty to the fief over familial fidelity. Yanaga (1964) notes, "Confucian orthodoxy, which the feudal regime forced upon the nation, weakened as people began to question the authority of the Shogunate" (p. 28). Ideological change also reflected itself through greater individualistic expression in the art and literature of the period. Thus, not only was there a rising sense of individualism among the rich merchant families, but but its effects were being felt throughout the whole of society. By the time of Perry's arrival to demand Japan open its doors to foreign trade and investment, the shogunate had also been greatly weakened. With the arrival of Perry, however, and the fact that the leading powers in the West had an approximately 40-year head start on the industrial revolution, an immediate and combined response was necessary to move from evolving exchange relations to a fully industrialized capitalist economy. It came from the central government and by 1870 taxes had been cut, feudal trade monopolies abolished, and major investments in railroads and heavy industry had begun (Stearns, 1993).

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As we have already argued, individualism in northern and western Europe grew out of the developing capitalist relations which also produced the Protestant reformation. The industrial revolution some 300 years later was merely a further extension of this process. In Japan, however, these two processes now needed to converge in a much more highly compacted form. In order to accomplish this, Yamazaki (1994) notes that Japan combined indivīdualistic behavioral principles of the merchants with collectivist organizational principles of the peasants and warriors. Stearns (1993) describes part of this process: "Many samurai were able to adapt their values to successful industrial management, and the way was left open for other kinds of leaders, notably successful businessmen, to join elements of the former nobility in forming a new elite" (pp. 117-118). Likewise, early industrialization relied on labor not from the peasants, but from the middle classes. The first mill workers in Meiji Japan were the daughters of the factory owners and wealthy businessmen. They enjoyed far greater individual freedom than most contemporary members of their gender, experienced pleasant working conditions, had a wage scale not incomparable with that of Europe, and generally exuded very positive and optimistic beliefs about themselves and their futures (Tsurumi, 1990).

Meanwhile, in order to create a ready supply of cheaper and more competitive labor, peasants were freed to pursue other occupations, farmers were given title to land (forcing the poorer ones to sell), and fertilizers were introduced which greatly increased food production and also resulted in a rise in population from 30 million in 1868 to 45 million in 1900. Peasants now left their villages and sought work in the factories and mills. This led to a breakdown of the extended family, an increase in prostitution, alcoholism and divorce. For a time around the turn of the century, "Japan had the highest divorce rate in the world and it centered on the lower classes" (Stearns, 1993; p. 125). Stearns also notes that, as in Europe, middle class critics lambasted the "wasteful habits" of the working class, "but in fact outlets for leisure declined even as work became more arduous" (p. 123). Thus, unlike the initial stage of industrialization in Japan, which resulted in an optimistic expression of middle class individualism, this second stage produced a pessimistic and negative — almost existential — expression of alienated individualism similar to that which existed among the working class in Europe during the same period. In order to combat this rising tide of class alienation and antagonism, the central government returned to collectivist organizational principles by once again rewriting Confucian ideology to fit a Bismarkian model of nationalism. Hoston (1994) states, "In 1903, school textbooks emphasized the theme of *chukan-aikoku* (loyalty to the monarch and patriotism toward the state). This was supplanted in 1910 by the theme of the unity of loyalty with filial piety in Japanese sentiment toward the emperor," or *kokutai*. (pp. 92-93). While this alone was unable to completely stem rising working class antagonisms and expressions of alienated individualism, evolving colonialist military policies allowed authorities to extend the Bismarkian model of limited economic security to certain elements of the working class while keeping the interests of a small privileged minority intact (Hoston, 1994).

Thus, although Japan was a later comer to the industrial revolution than northwestern Europe and North America, it was nevertheless able to make rapid progress by combining the individualistic needs of a small elite in control of resources and production with collectivist military and peasant traditions which kept the lower classes in check. Returning to our original theme, this suggests that access to resources and the means of production may play an instrumental, if not crucial role in the individualism-collectivism dimension, as well as in the relationship of individualism and collectivism to power distance.

Culture and Learning

Personality not only develops through the sociohistorical relation of individuals to the physical world, mediated by the labour process, but also through relations to other human beings which are mediated by language — Ian Burkitt — *Social Selves*

In addition to its impact on the individualism-collectivism dimension, availability of resources may also play a role in mediating different cultural approaches to learning. We might find, for example, that hands on trial-and-error learning styles tend to be more dominant in environments with ample resources where learners are free to experiment and throw away mistakes, while visual and auditory learning styles may be more common where learning tools are limited either by natural availability or power distance constraints. Although speculative and requiring further study, we base this initial hypothesis on the neurolinguistic assumption that there are three primary learning modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic (Bandler and Grinder, 1979), and that specific learning

environments will influence their selection (Davydov and Zinchenko, 1993). Suina and Smolkin (1994), for example, note that while Pueblo children learn through listening, watching and doing, much of the information is imparted either orally or visually by adults, often at adult-only activities which permit children's presence, but where the children are passive onlookers rather than active participants. Later, using improvised materials, children try out what they have seen or heard through imitation or role play:

> My brother and I worked privately to master the Buffalo Dance. We substituted jackets for the actual buffalo skin, placing them over our heads, so we might better imagine the feelings of the dancers as we perfected the appropriate steps. For one of our practice sessions, we even attached cardboard horns to the jackets, to make them more authentic. When we reached a certain stage of readiness, we had our father supply the singing to accompany our ever-improving performance. Finally, the dance was deemed sufficiently ready to share with relatives when they came to visit. (p. 118)

Placed in a Vygotskian perspective, Blanck (1990) notes, "The structures of perception, voluntary attention and memory, emotions, thought, language, problem solving, and behavior acquire different forms according to the historical context of the culture, its relationships, and its institutions" (p. 44). Rosa and Montero (1990) state, "Historical systems are the result of social practices. The rules happen to be the internal structure of practices that have been developed historically to respond to the needs of the physical or social environment and evolve according to their own dynamics. These rules help to organize social life, but at the same time they are internalized by each individual group member so that they govern his or her behavior in specific situations" (p. 62).

Let us turn to some of the experiences of Jean Briggs (1988), who as a young anthropologist in the early 1960s, spent approximately eighteen months living as an adopted Inuit daughter with the Utkuhikhalingmiut of Chantrey Inlet in the Canadian Arctic. She writes, "I had a number of reasons for wishing to be adopted, and there were several precedents for adoption as well; four kaplunas [whites] of my acquaintance, both scholars and laymen, who had wintered with Eskimos had done so as 'sons,' sharing the iglus of their Eskimo families. Living in the iglu would be warmer than living alone, I thought...; and I thought vaguely it might be 'safer' if one family had specific responsibility for me" (p. 25). In this relationship, Briggs stated she wanted to learn the Eskimo language along with the household and community skills appropriate to her adoptive role (e.g., "how to scrape skins, sew them, how to catch fish and preserve them or boil the oil out of them for use in lighting and heating the winter iglus"). She offered to supply tea and kerosene in exchange for fish, accommodation and the opportunity to learn their skills. Briggs describes the objective conditions as they existed in 1963 among the Utkuhikhalingmiut Inuit as follows:

> They were the most remote groups of Eskimos that I could find on the map of the Canadian Arctic, a people who in many ways lived much as they had in the days before *kapluna* [white men] appeared in the North. They were nomadic; they lived in snowhouses in winter, in tents in summer; and their diet consisted very largely of fish — trout and whitefish — supplemented now and again by a few caribou. (p. 24)

We shall now examine some of the learning problems faced by Briggs in this new culture. In so doing, we shall use the term *objective learning conditions* to refer to what has often been considered separate areas of cognition and affect. For Vygotsky, mental activity is a complex whole of cognition, motivations, and emotional feelings (Blanck, 1990), where affect and intellect are inseparable (Newman & Holzman, 1993): Vygotsky (1986) states, "When we approach the problem of the interrelation between thought and language and other aspects of mind, the first question that arises is that of intellect and affect. Their separation as subjects of study is a major weakness of traditional psychology, since it makes the thought process appear as an autonomous flow of 'thoughts thinking themselves,' segregated from the fullness of life, from the personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses, of the thinker" (p. 10). Furthermore, Newman and Holzman (1993) note that "Whether or not Vygotsky viewed emotions, affects, interests, volition and motivation as higher mental functions, he clearly saw them as social — socially produced, socially internalized, socially realized" (p. 78).

Returning to Briggs, we find that displays of anger are taboo among the Inuit. A common response to the frustrated sulking of a child might be to remind the offender that he or she is loved. In describing the objective learning conditions in her new environment, Briggs notes that laughter and joking were essential:

> Hostility among Utkuhikhalingmiut is ignored or turned into a joke; at worst it becomes the subject of gossip behind the offender's back. I too, did my best to smother my annoyance with frustration, but my attempts were not wholly successful. My training in self-control was less

perfect than theirs, and at the same time the strains were greater than those I was accustomed to dealing with in my own world. ...I did my best to learn with the children when they were taught to turn annoyance into amusement, but laughter did not come easily. (pp. 27-28)

The specific tasks which created the greatest problem for Briggs were those which required her to learn to scrape caribou in preparation for winter clothing, and mend and sew skin boots. The latter involved stretching skins when they shrank from drying, and then sewing very small stitches with very strong jaws so as to prevent the possibility of moisture getting into the boots. The resources necessary to learn, and ultimately apply these skills were severely limited. Caribou herds had diminished in 1958, initially resulting in famine. Although the Utkuhikhalingmiut had been able to shift to greater dependence on fishing as a source of protein, they still needed caribou skins for making boots and clothing. This caused a disproportionate amount of time to be spent on hunting caribou with minimal returns. It also meant an increased need for accuracy and minimal allowance for mistakes in treating those skins which were obtained. For those learning to stretch and sew, then. the objective conditions called for lengthy periods of visual observation, followed by limited trial. If mistakes were made by learners, the most qualified adult would immediately intervene by correcting the mistake and continuing the job. Among Utkuhikhalingmiut children, this intervention was accompanied by laughter and joking, which was then followed by intense observation. For Briggs, however, this same intervention was cause for great frustration at having her learning process interrupted. Placed in a Vygotskian frame, this suggests that the Utkuhikhalingmiut children, in interacting with their environment, developed certain capacities which later became internalized rules for learning. Holzman and Newman (1987) note that "in learning the causal relationship between playing with friends and happiness, children are learning what playing and happiness *are*" (p. 117).

Thus, when Vygotsky (1978) states that "the essential attribute of play is a rule which has become a desire" (p. 99), he means that the cultural learning styles which have been internalized by the child are transformed into the activity of play, where the child mimics the productive activity of adults and thus fulfills her/his desire to become a contributing member of adult society. In addition to explaining why children in play always act beyond their average age and daily behavior (Vygotsky, 1978), it also suggests that the specific learning styles themselves become internalized as rules. Berg (in Vygotsky, 1978), points out, "If one changes the tools of thinking available to a child, his mind will have a radically different structure" (p. 46). Thus for Vygotsky, "in the tradition of Marx and Engels, the mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture" (Vygotsky 1978; p. 7).

Rapid changes in the technological or economic bases of a culture may also produce conflicts in learning of the type experienced by Briggs. Oloko (1994) notes that complex division of labor, rapid urbanization and industrialization in Nigeria have produced highly alienating styles of learning. "The values that undergird modern societies, in which schools endogenously emerged, have been described as self-orientation, universalism, achievement, affective neutrality, and specificity. Values that are approximately opposite to the ones just mentioned have been identified as undergirding the social structure of traditional societies. These values are collectivist organization, particularism, ascription, affectivity, and diffuseness (Parsons, 1951)" (p. 198). Problems similar to this among migrant and minority populations in industrialized English speaking countries have also been well documented, where continuities and discontinuities may produce conflicts between learning styles which emphasize, say, competition and individuality among Mexican-Americans versus respect and interdependence (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

Even so-called idiosyncratic differences (occasionally termed learning disabilities) among dominant groups within a given culture can be a reflection of radical — even revolutionary — changes in social relations. Hands on learning, for example, exposes the learner to the possibility of making mistakes and to possible subsequent ridicule. This can be particularly traumatic in highly competitive post-industrialist capitalist societies such as the U.S., where stress-related disorders such as panic attack have produced a burgeoning industry in the sale of self esteem, and have caused educators to take a closer look at individual learning styles. Reporting in the home schooling magazine *Growing Without Schooling*, Helen Van Doren describes her own learning experiences:

I learned about fertilizing by watching my dad do it, and once I watched him start seeds in the house in the winter, and then let them get used to the outdoor weather gradually. I hadn't known about doing that, but after I watched him, I started some broccoli in the house myself. I think my dad sees that I know how to do these things, but he doesn't realize that I've learned them from him. There's a very different feeling when you learn things from watching, or from working with someone. You have the feeling that you aren't being pushed to learn it; you just

learn it. If you learn something by watching, you probably want to learn it. And sometimes you don't want to be taught when someone sits down and wants to teach you. (*Vol. 102*, p. 24)

Given the above considerations, one technique developed by Hough to address different cultural learning styles (and in light of what we have just said, individual ones as well), is to ask students at the beginning of a course to either train other students or the teacher to do something, anything, and then to note the approaches taken. This has proved fairly successful among Japanese technicians, engineers and managers charged with training factory operatives from S.E. Asia, as a means of sensitizing the former to culturally appropriate learning styles.

Sociohistorical Method

...often have we said, "practice wins in the end." ...But it may be said with equal truth, "theory wins in the end — Trotsky — *Problems of Everyday Life*

The practice of sociohistorical method seeks to build cross-cultural understanding — and ultimately empathy — by helping our students adapt to history rather than the racism, sexism, stigma and injustice of society. There are five essential aspects to sociohistorical method:

(1) that the analysis of culture should be based on sociohistorical processes which reveal causal dynamics and are predictive;
(2) that learning should lead development;
(3) that both learning and development should be grounded in practical activity;
(4) that practical activity should allow for the reverse development of scientific and spontaneous concepts;
(5) and that a dialectic synthesis of contrasts between scientific and spontaneous concepts should produce an understanding of deep level similarities in the process of cultural development, and ultimately lead to empathy.

(1) We have already demonstrated how the analysis of culture should be based on sociohistorical processes which reveal causal dynamics and are predictive. This can be done only if we apply the dialectics of historical materialism (Engels, 1971; Lenin, 1970) to our analysis. This, in fact, is exactly what Vygotsky did when he integrated anthropology, sociology and other social sciences concerned with history into psychology (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Rosa and Montero (1990) state that, "From a Marxist viewpoint, history is not simply a narrative that permits an understanding of the past; rather, history relies on material bases to explain the events that have affected a particular society" (p. 60). If we exclude history from our analysis we will be left with mere description — some of it accurate, some of it mythological, but none of it truly explanatory. How such data should be treated in the classroom, however, is a different matter and will be dealt with below.

(2) The second essential feature of sociohistorical method is that learning should lead development. Concerned more with the *How* of culture training than the *What* of cultural analysis, this point bears a certain limited similarity to Krashen's (1983) comprehensible input hypothesis (although unlike Krashen's model, it does not come from cognitive psychology), and can best be explained in terms of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, or ZPD. Cole (1993b), briefly describes the ZPD as follows:

> The zone he referred to is the gap between what children can learn independently and what they can accomplish when they are interacting with others who are more competent. The term "proximal" (nearby) indicates that the assistance provided goes just slightly beyond the child's current competence, complementing and building on the child's existing abilities instead of directly teaching the child new behaviors. (p. 201)

Vygotsky (1978) elaborates by stating that "the most essential feature of our hypothesis is the notion that developmental processes do not coincide with learning processes. Rather, the development process lags behind the learning process; this sequence then results in zones of proximal development" (p. 90). Increasingly educational literature, including that relating to the L2 classroom, is addressing issues such as "the ZPD as the basis for instruction" (Hedegaard, 1990), and "creating zones of possibilities" (Moll and Greenberg, 1990). Following Hedegaard, Moll and Greenberg, we attempt to "artificially create or provoke" (Vygotsky, 1978) social zones of classroom development where shared learning and problem solving activities based on sociohistorical content are beyond the abilities of any one student but can be accomplished cooperatively. In order to effect this, the sociohistories of the students must also be taken into account. Thus, rather than giving students lengthy sociohistorical analyses of Western individualism and the Protestant reformation (which may help enhance teachers' critical literary skills and aid in the development of classroom

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materials) all learning content is actually experienced in the classroom in the form of concrete activity (e.g., cooperative teaching of specific skills with first few, then many resources).

(3) In order to provoke or create this process of development, all learning must be clearly grounded in practical activity, our third essential feature of sociohistorical method. Sandra M. Fowler (1994), a developer of cross-cultural simulations and games and a member of the original research team that produced BAFA BAFA, addresses this point when she calls for the wedding of theory and practice:

> People facing an immersion experience in another culture have a high level need for both information and behavioral skills. Comprehensive cross-cultural training addresses the what, why, when, where and how of the intercultural experience. The information imparting the who, what, when and where part of the preparation meets the cognitive needs of cross-cultural sojourners. The "how" part of cross-cultural training meets behavioral-skill needs of the sojourners. (p. 466)

Placed in a Vygotskian perspective, this means that the *what* of cultural information and the *how* of behavioral skills must be combined in practical activity. This is because "thought and action are inseparable. One does not need to understand before acting; one acts... and through acting, one understands" (Holzman, 1988; p. 109). Vygotsky believed that through the socially mediated use of tools (in our case, the *Sociohistorical Practice* of cross-cultural communication in the language classroom), there arises a unity of learning and development (Holzman, 1988). Applied to the teaching of culture in the language classroom, this means that communicative language activities and culture-based content must be wedded in such a way as to provide for task-based information sharing and problem solving that provoke or create the process of development. Furthermore, combined with what we have said about the ZPD, this suggests that such practical activity rely heavily on the interaction of student peer groups. Mendoca and Johnson (1994) further elaborate this last point when they state:

> Both Barnes (1976) and Cazden (1988) base their support for more peer interaction upon the Vygotskyian notion that language use, whether written or oral, is a deeply rooted social act and, therefore, that peer interactions bring together the cognitive and social aspects of language by allowing peers to construct meaning within the context of social interaction (Forman & Cazden, 1985; Newman, Griffin & Cole, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). Brief (1984) agrees that people internalize thought better when they converse and argues that, like thought, writing is related to conversation as "the way they [students] talk with each other determines the way they will think and the way they will write" (p. 642). (p. 746)

(4) Our fourth point is that practical activity should allow for the reverse development of scientific and spontaneous concepts. Scientific concepts are not necessarily related to science as such. They are simply concepts which are formally learned — often in school (Elbow, 1986), but "lack the rich content of personal experience" (Vygotsky, 1986; p. 193). Spontaneous concepts, on the other hand, derive directly from everyday, concrete personal experience but are often difficult to articulate. An ESL student in an English speaking country, for example, may be able to give a textbook definition of individualism as a scientific concept but not express spontaneous concepts based on feelings of alienation and marginality experienced in the new culture, even though both concepts are direct reflections of the same sociohistorical process. These contradictions, or "contraries" as Elbow (1986) calls them, can only be resolved through the continual interpenetration of the two:

> Vygotsky asserts then that two contrasting motions are necessary for the interpenetration of these two types of concepts. Spontaneous or experientially learned concepts are helped "upward," as it were, to self-conscious understanding by the path of the scientific or formally learned concepts "downward." But scientific concepts are only helped downward or fully experienced — and thus fully able to be applied to unfamiliar instances — to the extent that spontaneous concepts have worked their way up to actualize them. (pp. 18-19)

Furthermore, these contradictions must be resolved in such a way as to reconstruct the key points in the developmental process. Without this sociohistorical perspective, true understanding is impossible. This again suggests the creation of zones of proximal development which (1) are grounded in practical activity and (2) account for these contradictions in terms of their underlying causal dynamics. If successful, this will help development of cultural empathy, as we now explain.

(5) This brings us to the fifth and final feature of sociohistorical method, that a dialectic synthesis of contrasts between scientific and spontaneous concepts should produce an understanding of deep level similarities in the process of cultural development, and ultimately lead to empathy. The primary goal of cross cultural communication is to build understanding and, where possible, to

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develop empathy — but empathy within the context of the process of historical development, not the static ideology of specific societies. We can only do this if we cut through surface differences in cultural behavior to reveal underlying causal dynamics. At the level of mass psychology, these dynamics should be fairly universal, and thus predictive. Idiosyncratic differences will of course exist but even these should be largely predictive. And there will be additional variables such as uneven and combined development which, while consistent with our understanding of sociohistorical change, will still require careful analysis. None of these minor variations should cloud understanding. This is extremely important because even such cultural abominations as the rise of fascism require understanding. Unless we can understand the causes, unless we can predict the conditions which give rise to such phenomena, we will never be able to prevent or control them. Mere lists of surface level ideological differences will explain nothing even if built into elaborate social skills training models. Once again, however, our approach runs counter to much of the thinking in mainstream cross-cultural communication. Storti (1989), for example, argues:

> Up to the moment we go abroad — or otherwise have a significant encounter with people from another culture or subculture — we have no reason or basis for believing that other people *including foreigners*, might behave differently — for believing, in other words, that some of the behavior we've picked up over the years might be peculiar to our particular group or society. Even if we suspect as much, we cannot conceive of what the behavior of foreigners might be like. We cannot expect a Tunisian to behave like a Tunisian if we've never met a Tunisian. We are obliged by the limits of our experience to expect a Tunisian to behave the way all the other people we know have always behaved: like us. Thus, while we may not choose to assume that others are like us, while we may even *know* better than to assume that others are like us, and while we may very much wish we could stop expecting everyone to be like us, the force of our conditioning leaves no alternative. (p. 50)

What Storti is suggesting here is that cross-cultural misunderstandings occur because people naturally assume those from other cultures are going to be similar to them even though they are not. Therefore, the emphasis of cross-cultural training programs should be on identifying and exposing cultural differences — or, put another way, that cultural sensitivity can be heightened through an increased awareness of cultural difference. While this may be true in a very limited way at the superficial or pre-contact level, the fact is that people *do* expect to experience differences during cross-cultural encounters. That they may not be able to anticipate what all of these differences will be, or come to terms with them after they have been encountered, is a reflection of the inadequacy of cross-cultural training, not of an inherent ethnocentrism which blinds us to cultural difference. Furnham and Bochner (1990) argue that:

> As has been indicated earlier, most of the culture-training programmes have vague, largely unspecified aims, reflecting their lack of a systematic rationale. The stated goal of most orientation programmes is to make travellers more effective in their jobs and in their interpersonal encounters with their indigenous counterparts, but exactly how this is to be accomplished is usually not made explicit. Consequently, the content of these programmes is a mixture of information, the resolution of critical incidents, and heightened awareness of the cultural bias in construing reality. Such a curriculum in turn reflects the somewhat vague ideas about what determines the difficulties. If pressed, most trainers will say that they are trying to alleviate culture shock (Oberg, 1960), role shock (Byrnes, 1966), culture fatigue (Guthrie, 1966) and other similar conditions. However, these concepts are vague, overinclusive and mostly used to refer to states of mind in the person, when the real locus of the problem resides in the transactions between the individuals and their other-culture counterparts. (p. 239)

Sociohistorical method attempts to correct this, not at a level of specific societies (e.g., national character studies), but at the level of history by allowing students to practice various socially mediated adaptive responses to historically based cultural conditions. In so doing, it attempts to reconstruct the key points in the developmental process. Put another way, the goal is for students to reach a level of understanding where they will be able to say, "Yes, I can see how poverty tends to produce collectivist adaptive responses," or, "Yes, I understand how affluence and access to greater resources produce choice and individualism." Here we have the beginnings of empathy at the sociohistorical level. It is unlikely that descriptions of differing values, beliefs and ideologies — even when placed in the context of philosophical or religious traditions (e.g., Confucianism as contrasted with the Protestant ethic) — can produce such meaningful understanding, let alone empathy. At best they are abstract generalizations with little predictive value. At worst, they become cultural myths which reinforce class exploitation, ethnocentrism and prejudice.

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Classroom Applications

We are forming the real human beings of our epoch, who still have to fight to create the conditions out of which the harmonious citizen... may emerge — Trotsky — *Problems of Everyday Life*

In order to put all that we have said in this section into a practical and concrete perspective, it may be worthwhile to briefly outline the three cross-cultural learning activities that appear at the end of this article. *The T.V. Generation*, developed primarily for Japanese young adult and adult learners of English, is a cooperative reading and problem solving activity about the relationship of choice and resources to individualism. Students explore similarities and differences in behavior over time (ranging from limited to gradually expanding options for television viewing). Although no mention is made of specific countries, these differences in behavior reflect patterns of change from community to family to individual viewing as occurred among the middle classes, first in the U.S. over a period of approximately 20 years beginning in the early 50s, then began in Japan about ten years later, and are now beginning in countries such as Vietnam. In the process of responding to various television viewing options, students discover how their behavior and values are socially mediated and come to understand how changing material conditions produce differing cultural responses. This, in turn, allows them to build greater empathy along the collectivism-individualism dimension.

The Menu Game attempts to address both issues of the individualism-collectivism dimension and power distance in the context of a rapidly changing set of values and behaviors which can be observed today among the increasingly affluent youth and young adult populations in Japan. It is intended to make students more aware of how the sociohistorical conditions which produce power distance will also produce collectivism. Finally, the *Bowline Game* is designed to increase awareness of how education and training methods are determined by availability of resources. Those with few resources will tend to rely more on visual and auditory learning techniques, while those with greater resources will rely more on trial and error.

As we noted in the beginning of this article, our purpose is to present the theoretical and practical framework for a new model of cross-cultural communication. This is an ongoing dialectic process of interpenetration of theory and practice. Therefore, the activities which appear on the following pages are to be thought of as working samples of *Sociohistorical Practice*. Teachers who wish may test them in their classrooms. Any feedback, addressed to the author, will be greatly appreciated. It is hoped that teachers in the field will find them interesting and useful enough to continue developing materials in the same manner.

The Television Generation

This activity works best in groups of 3-6. It is appropriate for mixed levels ranging from high-beginner to advanced.

Step One (10-15 minutes): For even numbers of students, divide the group equally into readers and interviewers, then copy and give each student the appropriate Reader or Interviewer card. For odd numbers of students, copy an extra interviewer card (there will be one more interviewer than reader for each group). Explain to the readers that they will have three minutes to read the passage. At the end of three minutes, the interviewers will take turns asking questions about the reading passage. It will be the job of the readers not only to answer the interviewers' questions, but also to supply any additional information which they think is important. The purpose of this part of the activity is to share the information contained in the reading with all the members of the group.

Step Two (5 minutes): Copy and pass out one Television Dilemma card to each member of the group. Students should read silently and decide individually which of the four possible solutions they would choose.

Step Three (5-10 minutes): Copy and pass out one Accuracy Exercise card to each member of the group. Using the sentence patterns written on the card, students should write how they would solve the television dilemma. NOTE: Since this is an accuracy exercise, teachers may wish to spend some time focusing on grammar.

Step Four (5 minutes): Copy and pass out one Fluency Exercise card to each group (alternatively, you may wish to write the Fluency Exercise on the board). Tell the students that they have only five minutes to discuss their decisions regarding the television dilemma, and that they must explain their reasons. NOTE: Since this is a fluency exercise, students should not worry about making mistakes. Instead, they should try to express their ideas as *quickly* as possible.

Step Five (5 minutes): Copy and pass out one Problem Solving card to each group (alternatively, you may wish to write the Problem Solving exercise on the board). Tell the students

that they have only five minutes to reach a group consensus regarding the television dilemma. Which of the four possible choices do they *AS A GROUP* think would be best? NOTE: You may wish to point out to the students that among the four possible solutions, the first is the most collectivist, the second slightly less collectivist, the third more individualist and the fourth most individualist.

Step Six (Optional — no time limit): Copy and pass out one Bonus card to each member of the group. Tell them that this is an "open-ended" discussion. There are no correct or incorrect answers. NOTE: This can also be done as a follow-up writing exercise.

Reader's Card (270 words @ 90 wpm = 3 min.)

Can you remember a time when there were no televisions? I can't. I was born shortly after World War II and our house was one of the first in our neighborhood to have a television set. Some of my earliest memories are of friends visiting to watch T.V. We all sat around together and watched as a group, fascinated by the magic box.

But by the time I was six or seven years old, most families had their own T.V. sets. We didn't watch in neighborhood groups anymore. Instead, we stayed at home and looked at television with our families. It had become a family activity. Sometimes there would be arguments -- especially between my sister and me -- over what program to watch. In such cases, my mother would usually decide for us.

One or two years later, my grandfather, who loved baseball, bought his own television set. Now we had two choices. If somebody was looking at a program we didn't like, we could run to Grampa's room. Even if he was watching a baseball game, he would always let us change to what we wanted to see.

As the years went by, television sets became smaller and less expensive. Families with enough money would sometimes have two or even three sets in their home. At the same time, the number of television stations increased. People had more choices about what programs to watch. As a result, in only 20 years, people had become less collectivist, or group-oriented, and more individualistic. The many hours every week spent watching television had become a matter of individual preference.

Interviewer's Card — Ask the reader(s):

- In the early days of television, why were people more group-oriented?
- What kinds of groups first watched television together?
- Why did they stop?
- What kinds of groups watched television together next?
- If there was an argument over what to watch, who would decide?
- What happened when the author's grandfather got his own television?
- How did watching television become more of an individual activity?
- According to this story, what might some of the causes of individualism be?
- Is there any other important information you think our group should know about the story ?

The Television Dilemma

Your favorite weekly television program and your brother's favorite television program are at the same time. You almost never watch the program you want. What should you do?

- Watch your brother's favorite program, even if you don't like it.
- Ask to trade every other week. One week you watch your program, the next you watch his.
- Go to a friend's house and watch your favorite program there.
- Buy your own television and watch your favorite program in your room.

Accuracy Exercise

Use a separate piece of paper to complete the following:

I think I would probably _____ because _____. On the other hand, I might_____. That way, _____. I doubt I would _____ because _____.

Fluency Exercise

Discuss your decisions regarding the television dilemma in your group. Explain your reasons. You have only five minutes.

Problem Solving

Your group has to reach agreement on what would be the best course of action regarding the television dilemma. You have five minutes to do this.

Bonus

In general the more choices you have, the more individualistic you tend to become. Sometimes the number of choices is limited by economics (for example, if you come from a large family which can afford only one television set). Other times, the number of choices is determined by group hierarchy (for example, the age or status of the members of your group). Discuss the following in your group:

- Do you think you are more or less individualistic than your parents? Why?
- What do you think the decision-making hierarchy might be in a large family?
- Throughout history, do you think poor people or rich people have been more individualistic?

The Menu Game

Play this game in groups of six. It is appropriate for mixed levels ranging from high-beginner to advanced.

Step One (approximately 2-3 minutes): Give the reading card to one of the six students. Tell him/her to read the card out loud to the group.

Step Two (5-10 minutes): Take back the Reading card. Copy and give each member of the group a Cloze Exercise sheet. Tell the students to fill in the sheet with words they think make sense. NOTE: It is not necessary that they remember every word in the original reading -- they should merely try to approximate the original meaning. After they have completed the cloze exercise, tell them to compare answers. Then return the Reading card to the group and ask them whether their answers fit the original meaning or not.

Step Three (approximately 5 minutes): The oldest person in the group should be the high school tennis coach. Give him Role Play Card #1. The youngest person in the group should be given Role Play Card #2. Give one Role Play Card to each other member of the group. Tell the students to read their cards silently. They should not show their cards to other members of the group. If they have any questions, they should ask you. When they have finished reading their Role Play Card, they should turn it over. The menu side of the card should be facing up. Tell the coach (the person with Role Play Card #1) to begin the conversation. The waiter will come to take their orders in three minutes. Start the activity. Use a stopwatch. After three minutes, go to their table and, playing the part of the waiter, take the order. Ask, "Are you ready to order?"

Step Four (5 minutes): Copy and give one Initial Feedback card to the group. Ask one of the students to read it out loud. Give them five minutes to discuss.

Step Five (5 minutes): Copy and give one Evaluating the Game card to the group. Give them five minutes to evaluate their score. Help them with any questions they may have.

Step Six (No time limit): Copy and pass out one Bonus card to each member of the group. Tell them that this is an "open-ended" discussion. There are no correct or incorrect answers. NOTE: This can also be done as a follow-up writing exercise.

Reading Card

Sometimes you may find yourself in a situation where it is difficult for you to express what you want. For example, you might be in a group and feel that you have to accept the decision of the group or the group leader, even though that decision may be different from your own personal wishes. The following might be such a situation:

You are on the high school tennis team. Your team is playing in a regional championship in a nearby city and you and your team members will be staying overnight at a local hotel. In the evening you will have dinner with your fellow team members and your tennis coach. What should you do at dinner — all order the same thing or each order what you want?

Cloze Exercise

Sometimes you may find yourself in a _____ where it is difficult for you to _____ what you want. For example, you might be in a group and _____ that you have to accept the _____ of the group or the group leader, even though that decision may be _____ from your own personal _____. The following might be such a _____:

You are on the high school _____ team. Your team is playing in a regional championship in a nearby _____ and you and your team members will be staying overnight at a local _____. In the evening you will have _____ with your fellow team members and your tennis _____. What should you do at dinner — all order the _____ thing or each order what you _____?

Role Play Card #1

You love shrimp curry. The shrimp curry at this restaurant is very good and that is why you brought the students here. Suggest that everybody have the *A Course*.

Role Play Card #2

You are allergic to shrimp. If you eat even a small piece of shrimp you will get very sick.

Role Play Card #3

You don't like hamburger steak very much. Also, you only have ¥1,000 and you need ¥150 for the bus back to the hotel.

Role Play Card #4

You don't like hamburger steak and you don't care too much for curry either. You would prefer to have the pork cutlet.

Role Play Card #5

You don't like anything on the menu. You especially dislike hamburger steak!

Role Play Card #6

You don't eat pork. Either the shrimp or the hamburger steak would be okay.

MENU

"A" Course – Shrimp Curry ¥750
"B" Course – Hamburger Steak ¥850
"C" Course – Pork Cutlet ¥950

Initial Feedback

Read your role play cards out loud to the group. Is there any information on any of the cards that was not discussed by the group?

Yes? Discuss why this information was withheld. What are the advantages and disadvantages of withholding information?

No? How do you feel about people expressing different opinions? Are you comfortable with it or do you think it might lead to arguments and bad feelings?

Evaluating the Game

Score one point for each person who expressed the opinions, preferences or needs written on their Role Play Card during the game. Score one additional point for each person who expressed their preference more than once during the game. Score five points if the group decided to order individually.

1-6 points? Your group was strongly *Collectivist* in this situation. You tended to allow either the group as a whole or the group leader (the coach) to make the decision. Even if you decided to order individually, the decision was made with little discussion of personal preference and was therefore collectivist.

7-11 points? Your group was somewhere between *Collectivist* and *Individualist* in this situation. While some of you may have expressed individual preferences or opinions, group consensus also played an important role.

12-17 points? Your group was strongly *individualist* in this situation. Even if in the end you all decided to order the same thing, there was a good deal of discussion and expression of different points of view. And if you decided to order individually, there still must have been a moderate amount of discussion of personal preferences.

Discussion Card

In large part, individualism is determined by choices. The more choices people have, the more individualistic they tend to become. Sometimes choices are limited by economy or technology. Other times, choices are limited by group hierarchy, or leadership. The more hierarchical the group, the less individualistic people will be. Again, the reasons may be economic or technological. Discuss the following in your group:

- Was the opinion of the coach more important than the other members of your group?
- Can you think of situations where (a) you want others to choose for you, and (b) you want to choose for yourself?
- Do you think patterns of group hierarchy are changing? If so, how and why?

The Bowline Game

This activity is designed to increase awareness of how education and training methods are determined by availability of resources. It is particularly appropriate for company employees who are involved in training foreign factory personnel. It works best in groups of 8-12. It is appropriate for mixed levels ranging from intermediate to advanced. *Useful Language:* Put this and under/over/around/through; Make a loop.

Step One (10-15 minutes): Select 2 students to act as supervisors. Tell them that they are each going to teach a group of their fellow students how to tie a bowline knot, but that first they have to learn how themselves. Give them each a copy of the How to Tie a Bowline card and some string to practice with. Tell them that they have to keep practicing until they master the knot without referring to the card. Occasionally check back with them to see how they are doing. While the two supervisors are working on their knots, divide the remaining students into pairs. Copy and pass out Reading Card #1 student A in each pair, and Reading Card #2 to Student B in each pair. Tell the students that they have only one minute to read their cards silently. After one minute, collect the cards and tell the students to explain what they read to their partners. Allow approximately 5 minutes for this part of Step Two. After the pairs have exchanged their reading card information, divide the students into groups of 3-6 and give one member of each group a Fluency Exercise card. These cards contain six questions, all of which have to be answered within 5 minutes. Tell students to speak quickly. They shouldn't worry about making mistakes. They only have 5 minutes.

Step Two (2-3 minutes): Once the two supervisors have mastered the knot, assign one supervisor to each group. Give the supervisor of the first group a single string (limited resources), and give 25-35 strings to the supervisor of the second group (abundant resources). Tell the supervisors that these are the resources they have to teach from and that they will have to develop teaching methods appropriate for their resources.

Step Three (10 minutes): Allow 10 minutes for the groups to work on their bow lines. Stop the activity after 10 minutes, no matter what the result. NOTE: You may wish to give one-minute and thirty-second warnings.

Step Four (2 minutes): Bring the two groups together. Pass out one Evaluation card to each student. Ask the students to discuss the learning methods they employed in their group. Were there differences between the two groups?

Step Five (3-5 minutes): Copy and pass out one Accuracy Exercise card to each student. Tell them to use a separate piece of paper to complete the sentences. NOTE: You may wish to spend some extra time correcting mistakes.

Step Seven (No time limit): Copy and pass out one Discussion card to each member of the group. Tell them that this is an "open-ended" discussion. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Then bring the two groups together and have them compare their feelings about their training. NOTE: You may also wish to do a writing exercise.

<u>Reading Card #1</u> (80 words/1 min.)

You are factory trainees and your job for today is to learn how to tie a bowline. A bowline is a kind of knot. You will be divided into two groups and each group will have to produce one perfect bowline. You will have supervisors who will teach you how to tie this knot. You will have ten minutes to accomplish this. The final knot or knots must be presented for inspection. The group with the best knot will win.

<u>Reading Card #2</u> (80 words/1 min.)

The bowline is a kind of loop knot. Also known as the bowline knot, it is probably the simplest and most practical knot in existence. Although nobody knows its origin, it has been used by sailors for hundreds of years to tie up ships at dock and fasten sails. The bowline knot is very strong and easy to tie. But it never slips or jams. And after being used, it is very easy to untie. That's why it's so popular.

<u>Fluency Exercise Card</u>

You have five minutes to get all the answers. Ask the students in your group:

- what their job is
- what they are going to do
- how much time they will have to finish their job
- what a bowline is
- what it can be used for
- why it is so popular

Evaluation Card

- There are three ways you might have learned to tie the bowline knot: (a) by watching others do it, (b) by listening and asking questions, or (c) by practicing.
- Which way did the group with few resources use most?
- Which way did the group with many resources use most?

Accuracy Exercise Card

Use a separate piece of paper to complete the following:

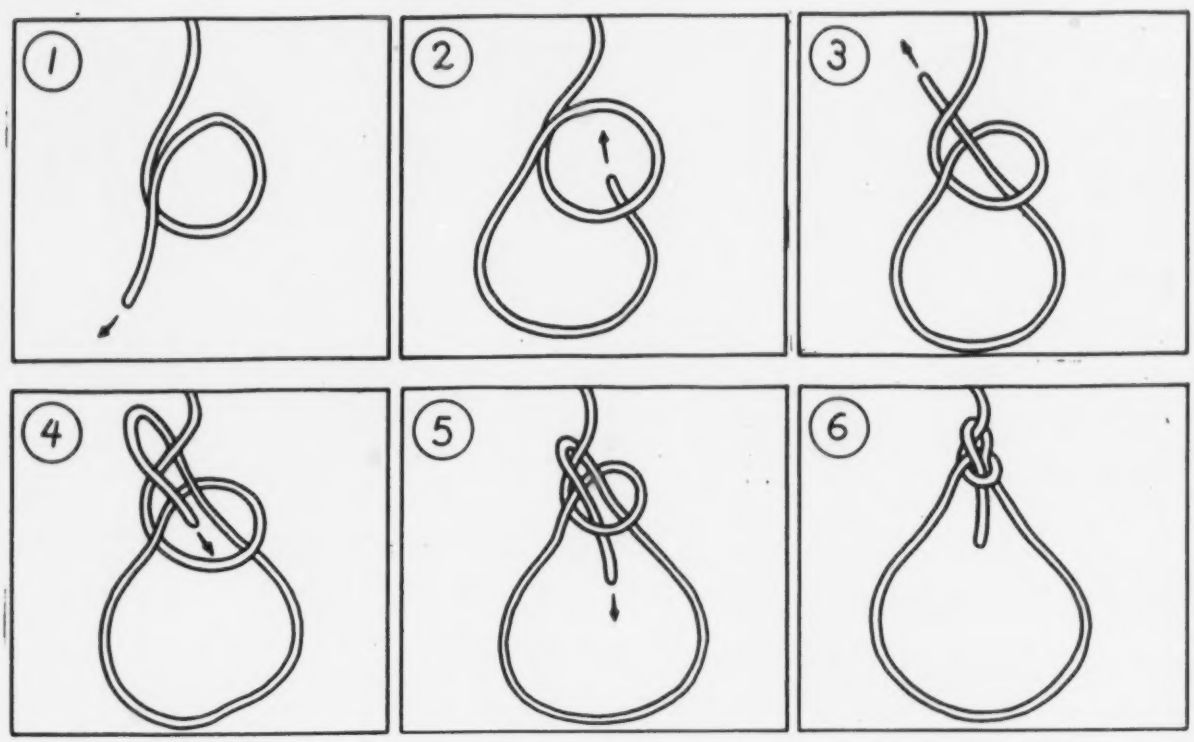
Our group _____resources. Our trainees _____ observing. They _____ listening and asking questions. And they _____ practicing.

Discussion Card

Discuss the following in your groups:

- How do you feel you learn best? By watching, listening or doing?
- How do you think the availability of resources will effect training methods?
- You need to train someone to use an expensive piece of factory equipment. There is only one such machine in your factory and it is constantly being used. How would you design a training program? Would you let the trainees use the equipment or just observe?

How to Tie a Bowline



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